Violent mass pushback at the Croatian-Bosnian border – 11 November 2026

Joint report by SOS Balkanroute and Medical Solidarity International · Nov 18, 2026

The events of 11 November 2026

On Wednesday 11th November 2026, around 09:00 AM, the outreach team of the Red Cross of the Una-Sana Canton and SOS Balkanroute received information about several groups of migrants that are located in the area of Cazin, or more precisely, in Tržac, Crnaja and Šturlić near the border with Croatia. According to the information, many migrants had suffered minor or more severe injuries.

As this outreach team provides daily humanitarian services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the area of the Una-Sana Canton, it decided upon such information to depart the office and drive towards these locations, which are about 35 kilometers away. The team arrived before 10:00 AM and encountered a total of 40 migrants moving in 6 groups in the following locations:

1. Tržačka Raštela – 3 single men from Bangladesh
2. Tržac – 2 single men from Sudan
3. Tržac – 2 single men from Sudan
4. Crnaja – 2 women, 2 male minors and 4 adult men from Nepal, India and Bangladesh
5. Crnaja – 12 single men from Pakistan and Bangladesh
6. Šturlić – 1 woman and 12 adult men from India and Bangladesh

Upon arriving at the location, someone had already informed the police who were present there. The migrants had no money, many were barefoot and some of them barely had any clothes, while many were injured. Upon witnessing the severity of the injuries, the police had called an ambulance which arrived approximately 15 minutes after the Red Cross/SOS Balkanroute outreach team. A preliminary check indicated minor injuries for most of the migrants, while several of them were severely injured with probable fractures of legs, arms and ribs, open wounds as well as concussive head injuries. A total of 5 people were urgently transported to the Health Center of Cazin by ambulance, while some of them later received treatment at the Cantonal Hospital “dr. Irfan Ljubijankić” in Bihać. In the meantime, the Red Cross/SOS Balkanroute team provided the remaining migrants with food, water, clothes and shoes, as well as first aid services. Members of the outreach teams of the International Organization for Migration and Save the Children were also present at the location.

Due to the severity of the injuries, members of SOS Balkanroute were informed about this challenging situation, after which they also requested field assistance from Medical Solidarity International (MSI), which provides healthcare support and first aid to migrants.

The EU-funded organisations present were unable to secure transport for the injured. SOS Balkanroute, as a private initiative funded solely by donations, therefore stepped in – as it has done throughout the past months – and arranged transport by taxi to the Temporary Reception Center Lipa in Bihać for 12

migrants, prioritizing vulnerable persons such as injured people and women. The field personnel performed triage and determined that these individuals also probably suffered from fractured bones and severe head trauma. Those who were able to walk were supplied with additional food and water, and directed towards Bihać. Although many of them were also injured, they had to walk for hours to Bihać and on to the Lipa camp, because the international organisations funded with EU money were not able to transport them.

Testimonies

According to the testimonies of migrants on the day of these events, they had crossed the border from Bosnia and Herzegovina into Croatia, and were near the Slovenian border when the Croatian police caught them and transported them back to a forest near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, where they were joined in a group of 53 migrants of different nationalities. It was at this place that around 15 masked police officers took the money and destroyed the phones of all the migrants, while they also took some of their clothes and shoes. Soon they were transported to another place and pushed back across the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this process they were beaten with hands, feet and police batons, as well as threatened with gunshots.

One of the men from Pakistan later told Bosnian public broadcaster BHRT that the Croatian police came and caught them, and that they had neither run away nor hidden in the forest. He said his arm had been broken.

Medical Solidarity International on site

At 10:45, Medical Solidarity International received information about the pushback and injuries from SOS Balkanroute, as well as about the fact that an ambulance had already transported 5 people to a local hospital, while SOS Balkanroute had arranged transport by taxi for 12 additional people. Upon arriving at the petrol station in Crnaja, the MSI team found a group of 14 people, nearly all of them injured. Also part of the group were 2 women and 2 minors. MSI immediately started to provide first aid assistance to the migrants.

The first person they encountered was experiencing severe pain in his right arm. A distinct protrusion was visible on his forearm, leading the team to suspect a possible fracture of the ulna. Unfortunately, all available seats in the 3 taxis were taken, so this person could not be transported and he had to walk to Bihać for 8 hours. We later learned that his arm was indeed fractured and that he had been placed in a cast after being taken to the hospital by IOM two days later.

After providing initial first aid to the person, MSI attended to the 13 other people. They performed basic first-aid to six people with open wounds across their bodies, ranging from head wounds to wounds on the lower legs. A further 8 people came with bruises and swelling across their bodies. In three cases, they saw possible fractures: two possible fractures of the hand/fingers, and one possible fracture of the cheekbone. While they were providing initial first-aid for these people, another 7 to 10 people arrived, most of them injured with wounds and bruises, but there was no evidence of further fractures. The MSI team remained on site for approximately one hour. Afterwards, everyone with access to transport was picked up, while the remaining people set out on foot towards Bihać and onwards to Lipa – injured, and once again left without transport by the international organisations funded with EU money.

Additional treatment

Several of the injured received further treatment at the Cantonal Hospital in Bihać in the days after the pushback. The hospital has since confirmed their injuries.

Cantonal Hospital "dr. Irfan Ljubijankić", Bihać. Dr. Amel Mizić, Head of the Centre for Emergency Medicine, confirmed in the BHRT evening news (Dnevnik) on 16 November 2026:

- A total of eight migrants were examined, two of them with fractures.
- On 11 November, four people were examined, one of them with a serious thigh injury.
- On 13 November, another person was examined with a fracture of the distal (lower) forearm. This matches the man MSI treated on 11 November, who had to walk to Bihać and was brought to hospital by IOM two days later.
- Two further people were admitted after their condition worsened in the Lipa camp on 12 November and they began coughing up blood.

Confirmation by the police and Bosnian media

Police of the Una-Sana Canton. Haris Bašanović of the Criminal Police Sector of the MUP USK confirmed in the same BHRT report that a police patrol, accompanied by a criminal investigator of the Cazin police station, was sent to the scene and spoke with the injured. They told the police that officers of the Republic of Croatia had stopped them at the border and injured them.

Croatian reaction. According to N1, Croatian Minister of the Interior Davor Božinović rejected the allegations.

Media coverage. The case was reported by, among others, BHRT, Klix.ba, Avaz, Oslobođenje, Hayat, N1, Mondo and Izdvojeno.ba in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tportal.hr in Croatia and KOSMO in Austria.

Why we are making this case public

We have decided to make this case public. Every day, our teams meet people who have been pushed back – desperate and hungry, and more and more of them also marked by dog bites. Yet the number of injured people in this single incident marks a total escalation.

This violence is systematic and has been documented thousands of times. In October 2021, ARD Studio Vienna, together with Lighthouse Reports, Der Spiegel, SRF Rundschau, ARD Monitor, Libération, Novosti and RTL Croatia, filmed masked Croatian police officers beating people back across the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. The public prosecutor's office closed the case, further entrenching the impunity for this violence.

Sources

- BHRT Dnevnik, 16 Nov 2026: TV report with statements by Dr. Amel Mizić and the Una-Sana police (video)
- Izdvojeno.ba, 17 Nov 2026: statements by Dr. Amel Mizić (BHRT) and Haris Bašanović (MUP USK)
- N1, 17 Nov 2026: confirmation by hospital and police, reaction of Minister Božinović
- Hayat, 14 Nov 2026
- Avaz, 14 Nov 2026

- Oslobođenje, 14 Nov 2026
- tportal.hr, 14 Nov 2026
- SRF Rundschau, October 2021: video evidence of Croatian police beating migrants
- Lighthouse Reports, October 2021: joint investigation with ARD Studio Vienna
- Border Violence Monitoring Network: Black Book of Pushbacks (2022 edition)

Our demands

SOS Balkanroute and Medical Solidarity International call on the **Croatian authorities** to ensure:

1. An independent investigation into this incident and the violence that is manifesting itself at the Croatian-Bosnian border.
2. That this incident is dealt with at all levels of the authorities concerned.
3. An end to denying the violence that happens every day. The Black Book of Pushbacks alone documents more than 1,600 testimonies of human rights violations affecting almost 25,000 people at Europe's borders.

We further call on the **European Commission, Frontex, IOM and all relevant EU-funded actors in the border region** to ensure:

1. Transport from the pushback area to the Temporary Reception Center Lipa in all pushback cases, not only for the injured – especially now in winter, when at these temperatures it is a matter of life and death.
2. Full medical care for all those affected, as well as for all residents of the camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. Access to medical care in the Lipa camp.
4. Access to safe drinking water in the Lipa camp. Findings of the local public utility company on the state of the water supply show that the water is not potable and poses a serious health risk to the camp's residents. The amount of water delivered by tanker trucks must be increased so that it is sufficient to supply the whole camp, which is currently not ensured.
5. Independent monitoring of the conditions along the Bosnian-Croatian EU external border.
6. The direct relocation of unaccompanied minors from the pushback area to the Center for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors run by the Italian organisation IPSIA, up to its full capacity. Two minors were among the people violently pushed back on 11 November – Lipa, where victims of pushbacks end up injured and without adequate care, is no safe place for children.

Vienna and Hamburg, 18 November 2026

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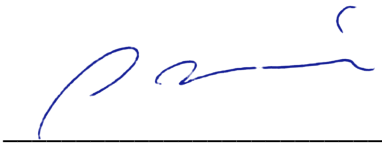
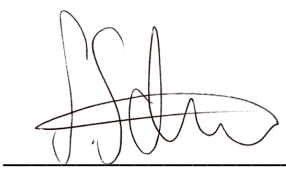


Petar Rosandić
President, SOS Balkanroute



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